AMAR CHITRA KATHA

# ANDHAKA

## THE DARK LORD WHO SAW LIGHT

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# ANDHAKA

HEARING OF THE BEAUTY OF MOUNT MANDARA...

...LORD SHIVA CAME THERE WITH HIS WIFE, PARVATI, AND HIS GANAS*.

AH! IT IS AS BEAUTIFUL AS ITS NAME.

ONE DAY WHEN PARVATI WAS IN A PLAYFUL MOOD...

...SHE BROUGHT FORWARD HER HANDS...

...AND COVERED ALL THREE OF SHIVA'S EYES.

* ATTENDANTS

AT ONCE, THE WORLD WAS PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS.

HELD OVER THE FIERY THIRD EYE OF SHIVA, PARVATI'S HANDS BEGAN TO PERSPIRE.

THE PERSPIRATION FLOWED OUT AND FELL UPON THE GROUND...

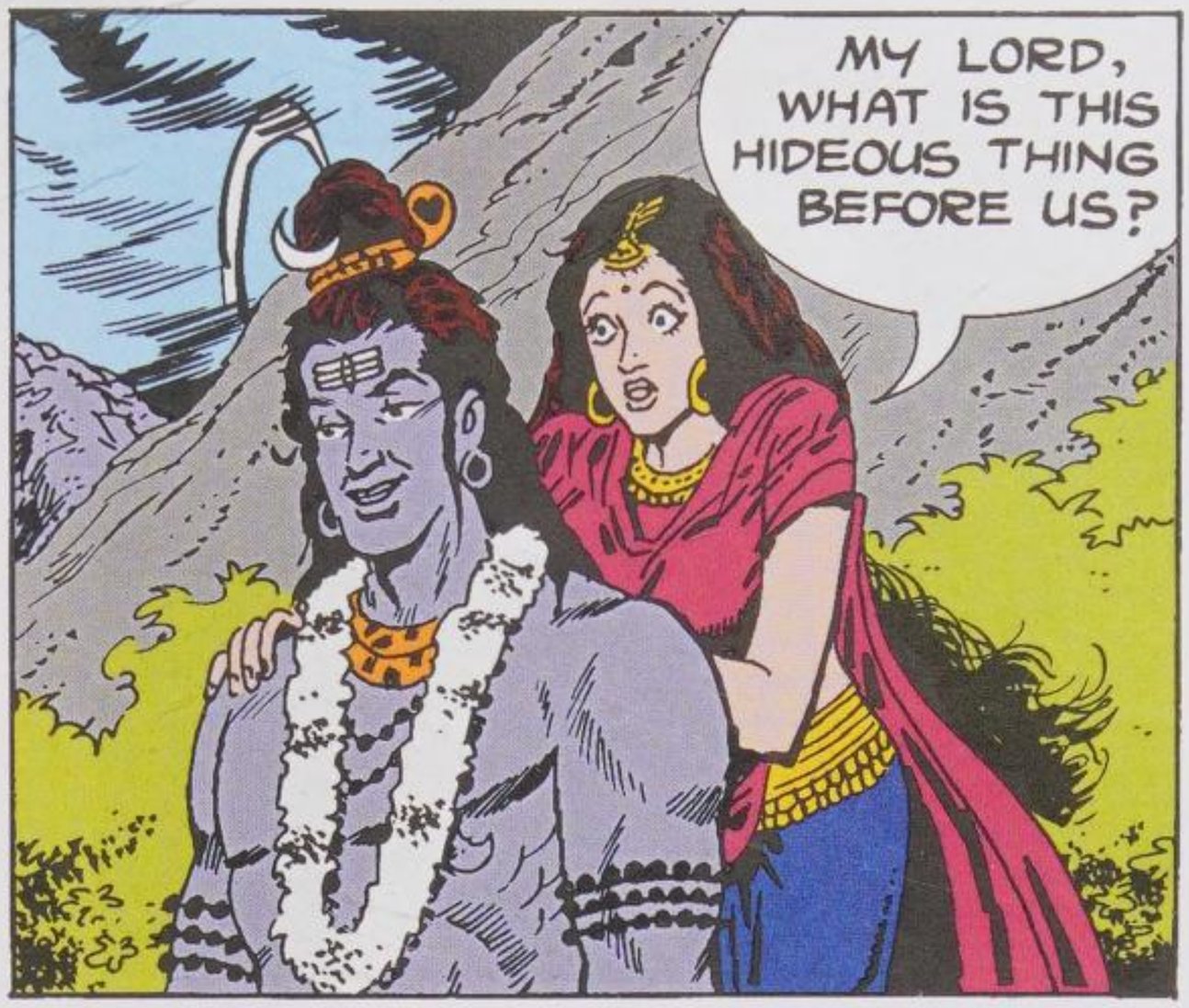
...AND SUDDENLY, THERE ROSE FROM IT A WEIRD BEING.

AS PARVATI STARED AT IT, THE OMNISCIENT SHIVA SMILED.

MY DEAR, IT IS YOU WHO CLOSED MY EYES, SO THIS IS YOUR WORK.

AT THIS PARVATI SMILED AND UNCOVERED SHIVA'S EYES.

IN THE RETURNING LIGHT, THE CREATURE LOOKED MORE HORRIBLE THAN BEFORE.



MEANWHILE FAR AWAY THE ASURA, HIRANYAKSHA, WAS PERFORMING AUSTERITIES IN ORDER TO PLEASE SHIVA.

KIND-HEARTED SHIVA, LISTEN TO MY PRAYER.

THE NEXT MOMENT, SHIVA WITH PARVATI AND ANDHAKA, APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

O ASURA, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DESIRE?

GREAT LORD, I HAVE NO SON TO INHERIT MY KINGDOM AFTER ME. MY BROTHER, HIRANYAKASHIPU HAS FIVE.

I FEAR MY LINE WILL BECOME EXTINCT WHEN I DIE. SO I BEG YOU— GRANT ME A SON.

CAST OFF YOUR DISTRESS, HIRANYAKSHA. I SHALL GRANT YOU ONE.

MY SON, ANDHAKA, IS EQUAL IN MIGHT TO YOU.

ACCEPT HIM AS YOUR OWN.

IN GREAT JOY, HIRANYAKSHA TOOK ANDHAKA TO HIS KINGDOM...

...AND THE BLIND ANDHAKA BEGAN TO LIVE IN HIS NEW HOME.

HAVING GAINED SHIVA'S FAVOUR, HIRANYAKSHA GREW ARROGANT. HE LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER THE THREE WORLDS...

...STRIKING FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE DEVAS.

THIS EVIL ASURA WILL BE THE END OF US ALL.

IN DESPERATION, THE DEVAS WENT TO SEEK THE AID OF LORD VISHNU.

DO NOT BE DISTRESSED. I SHALL AT ONCE RID THE WORLD OF HIRANYAKSHA.

LORD VISHNU TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO VARAHA, THE MIGHTY BOAR...

...AND PUT TO ROUT THE ARMIES OF HIRANYAKSHA.

THEN IN HIS TRUE FORM, VISHNU USING HIS SUDARSHAN CHAKRA...

...PUT AN END TO THE ASURA'S LIFE.

LATER, HE BLESSED ANDHAKA...

...AND MADE HIM KING OF THE ASURAS.

BUT ANDHAKA'S ENVIOUS COUSINS COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE HIM ON THE THRONE. THEY BEGAN TO TAUNT HIM.

WHAT KIND OF KING WILL YOU BE—BLIND AS YOU ARE?

OUR UNCLE WAS A FOOL TO HAVE ADOPTED A BLIND FELLOW.

ANYWAY, WHAT CLAIM HAVE YOU TO THE KINGDOM OF ONE WHO WAS NOT YOUR REAL FATHER?

ONE OF US SHALL BE KING. WE HAVE DECIDED.

HELPLESS AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT, ANDHAKA BEGAN TO THINK.

IF ONLY THERE WAS SOME WAY TO BECOME OTHER THAN WHAT I AM. YES... I KNOW HOW.

AND ONE DARK NIGHT, ANDH
WENT INTO THE DEPTHS OF A

IN THAT DESOLATE PLACE, HE BEGAN TO DO PENANCE. STANDING ON ONE LEG, WITH ARMS RAISED...

... HE WA
SOON R
TO A SK

AT LAST, LORD BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

O ASURA, CEASE YOUR TERRIBLE AUSTERITIES. CHOOSE ANY BOON YOU DESIRE.

MY LORD
HAVE UND
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DEATH
TO M

YOU SHALL BECOME LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS. BUT WHOEVER IS BORN MUST DIE. YOU MAY HOWEVER CHOOSE THE MANNER OF YOUR DEATH.

THEN, LET THE MOST EXCELLENT OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD, WHATEVER HER AGE, BE LIKE A MOTHER TO ME...

...AND SHOULD I LOOK UPON HER AS ANYTHING BUT MOTHER, LET DESTRUCTION BEFALL ME INSTANTLY.

BRAHMA WAS SURPRISED AT THIS REQUEST, BUT HE SMILED.

O FOREMOST OF ASURAS, WHATEVER YOU HAVE DESIRED SHALL BE YOURS. REALIZE YOUR AMBITION. BUT ALWAYS FIGHT WITH HEROIC PERSONS.

SIGHTLESS AND SKELETAL AS I AM NOW, HOW CAN I FIGHT MY FOES? REST YOUR HEALING HAND UPON ME, GREAT LORD.

BRAHMA TOUCHED ANDHAKA...

...AND, AT ONCE, ANDHAKA BECAME FULL-BODIED, HANDSOME AND STRONG...

...AND GAINED THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF VISION.

THE TRANSFORMED ANDHAKA THEN RETURNED TO HIS PALACE.

COUSINS, IT IS I! ANDHAKA!

ANDHAKA? SURELY A BLESSED BOON HAS GIVEN YOU BOTH SIGHT AND THIS BEAUTIFUL FORM.

AWED BY HIS NEWFOUND VIGOUR AND BEAUTY, HIS COUSINS OFFERED NO RESISTANCE AND HE BECAME KING OF THE NETHERWORLD.

BUT LIKE HIS FOSTER-FATHER, ANDHAKA TOO BEGAN TO CRAVE FOR POWER AND MORE POWER.

I WILL NOT REST TILL I AM LORD OF EARTH AND HEAVEN.

HE SET OUT FROM HIS NETHER REALM AND BEFORE LONG CONQUERED THE EARTH AND THEN HEAVEN.

INDRA, YOU AND THE DEVAS SHALL PAY ME TRIBUTE FROM NOW ON.

ANDHAKA WAS NOW MASTER OVER ALL.

HE ABANDONED HIMSELF TO A LIFE OF INDOLENCE AND PLEASURE; AND THIS DISSOLUTE LIFE SPENT IN THE MIDST OF BAD COMPANIONS SPURRED HIM TO GREATER EVIL.

HE AND HIS FRIENDS BEGAN TO FREQUENT SITES OF SACRIFICE.

O SAGES...

?

!

...DON'T YOU KNOW? TO OFFER SACRIFICE TO THE DEVAS AND NOT TO ME, IS NOW A CRIME!

DRIVE THEM AWAY! WHIP THEM!

THUS DID ANDHAKA MAKE HIMSELF HATED EVERY-WHERE. BLINDED BY PRIDE, HE FORGOT COMPLETELY THE DESTINY HE HAD CHOSEN FOR HIMSELF.

ONCE, HE HAPPENED TO COME TO THE MANDARA MOUNTAIN.

WHAT A DELIGHTFUL PLACE! FRIENDS, WE SHALL STAY HERE AWHILE.

AND AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT. HE DECIDED TO SETTLE THERE.

ONE DAY WHILE EXPLORING THE MANDARA, ANDHAKA'S MINISTERS, DURYODHANA, VAIDHASA AND HASTI CAME UPON A STRANGE SIGHT.

DO YOU SEE THAT?

A HERMIT IN OUR LAND?

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!

WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?

OUR KING MUST HEAR ABOUT HER!

AT ONCE, THE MINISTERS WENT TO ANDHAKA.

O LORD OF ASURAS, IN A MOUNTAIN CAVERN, NOT FAR FROM HERE, WE SAW A STRANGE HERMIT. HE WAS IMMERSED IN MEDITATION AND WITH HIM...

...WAS A BEAUTIFUL LADY. SUCH BEAUTY I HAVE NEVER SET EYES ON BEFORE.

OF WHAT USE ARE EYES TO A MAN IF HE HAS NOT LOOKED UPON HER?

IS SHE SO EXCEPTIONALLY LOVELY? THEN SHE SHOULD BE MINE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU FIND OUT WHO SHE IS? GO, NOW! BRING HER HERE TO ME AT ONCE.

SO THE MINISTERS WENT BACK TO THE CAVE. THEY STOOD WAITING QUIETLY...

...TILL THE HERMIT OPENED HIS EYES.

WE ARE THE MINISTERS OF ANDHAKA, THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS.

OUR KING WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU ARE DOING HERE, AND WHO THIS BEAUTIFUL LADY IS.

I AM A HERMIT, OBSERVING THE PASHUPATA VOW AND...

A HERMIT ENGAGED IN PENANCE IN THE COMPANY OF A BEAUTIFUL LADY?

THIS BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN IS MY WIFE.

THIS LADY OF SUCH GREAT CHARM, **YOUR** WIFE!

LOOK AT YOUR UNCOUTH SELF. YOU ARE UNWORTHY OF HER. OUR KING HAS ORDERED YOU TO HAND HER OVER TO HIM PEACEFULLY.

THE RAKSHASA IS WELCOME TO COME AND TAKE HER.

YOU ARROGANT ROGUE! HE WILL COME AND TAKE HER BY FORCE.

CONTD. ON PAGE 19

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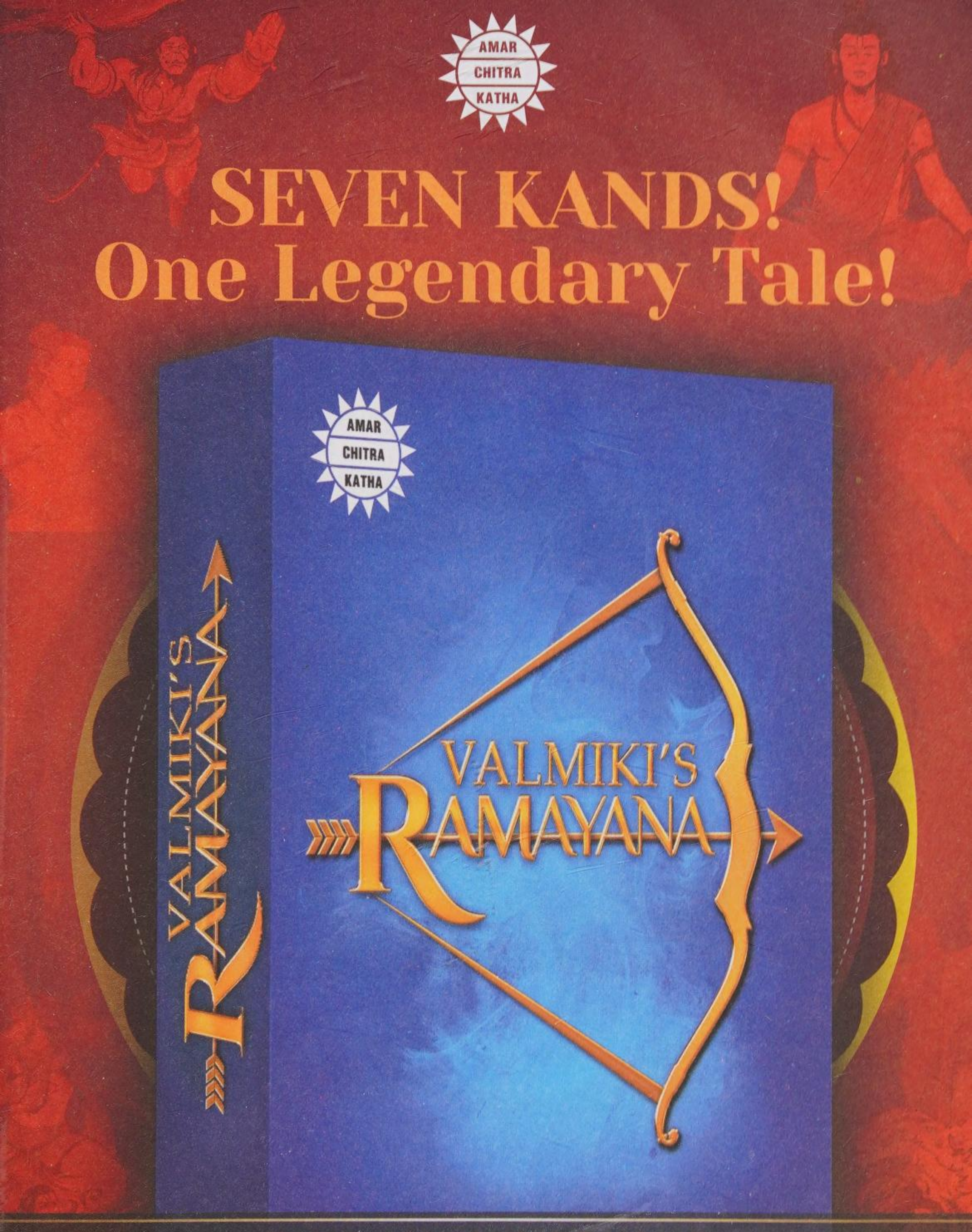
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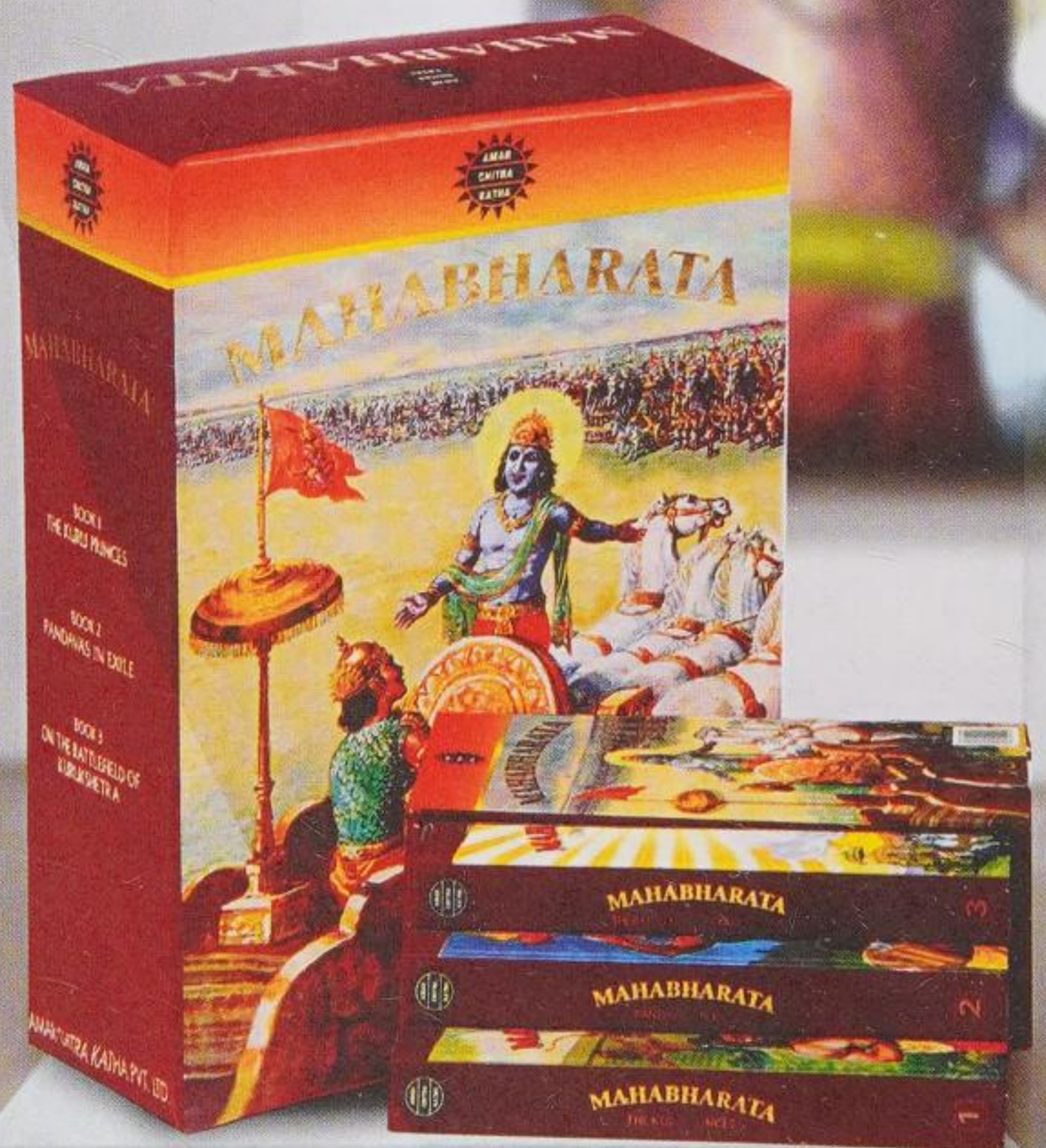


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THE MINISTERS RETURNED WITH SHIVA'S MESSAGE AND DELIVERED IT TO ANDHAKA.

WE ADVISE YOU TO PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE AT ONCE.

ANDHAKA BLAZED UP IN ANGER LIKE FIRE FED WITH GHEE.

YES, I WILL ATTACK THAT CRUDE HERMIT. LET HIM KNOW WHO ANDHAKA IS!

ANDHAKA SET OUT FOR THE MOUNTAIN CAVE.

AS HE APPROACHED ITS ENTRANCE—

I AM VIRAKA—MY MASTER'S GUARD. WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?

WHEN ANDHAKA IGNORED THE QUESTION AND ADVANCED...

...VIRAKA ATTACKED.

HIS SHOWER OF MISSILES WAS SO DEADLY THAT...

...ANDHAKA HAD TO RUN FOR HIS LIFE.

SOME TIME LATER AT THE CAVE—

DEAR ONE, I SEE FEAR AND SORROW IN YOUR EYES.

I AM GOING AWAY TO PERFORM THE MOST SEVERE AUSTERITIES TO FREE YOU FROM THEM. VIRAKA WILL STAND GUARD OVER YOU WHEN I AM AWAY.

AND SHIVA LEFT.

MEANWHILE, ANDHAKA HAD REGAINED HIS LOST COURAGE. AS IF DRAWN BY HIS DESTINY, HE RETURNED TO THE CAVE WITH AN ARMY.

A GREAT STRUGGLE ENSUED ONCE AGAIN WITH VIRAKA.

FELL THE WRETCH! FELL HIM!

THIS TIME, IT WAS VIRAKA WHO COLLAPSED, ALMOST BURIED UNDER A HUGE PILE OF WEAPONS.

AHA! NOW TO GET HOLD OF HER!

O BRAHMA, VISHNU, INDRA! COME TO MY RESCUE.

AT ONCE, THOSE DIVINE BEINGS ARRIVED THERE. AS THEY WERE ENTERING PARVATI'S PRIVATE ABODE, THEY CAME IN FEMALE FORMS.

DO NOT WORRY, O PARVATI. WE ARE BY YOUR SIDE NOW.

EYES FLASHING IN ANGER, THE DIVINITIES LAUNCHED THEIR ATTACK ON THE ASURAS.

THEY SENT FORTH MIGHTY STREAMS OF ENERGY, BELABOURING ANDHAKA AND HIS MEN.

ANDHAKA'S ARMY UNDER THE GENERAL, GILA, FOUGHT BACK BUT IT WAS A LOSING BATTLE.

THEN BLAZING FORTH LIKE A THOUSAND SUNS, SHIVA HIMSELF CAME THERE.

THE HAPPY PARVATI FOUGHT EVEN MORE VALIANTLY TO PROVE HER SKILL AND COURAGE TO HER LORD.

WHEN ANDHAKA'S ARMY HAD BEEN BEATEN BACK—

PARVATI, YOU ARE TRULY A BRAVE WOMAN.

IT WAS THEIR PRESENCE AND HELP THAT MADE ME BRAVE.

YOU, TOO, VIRAKA, WERE NO LESS VALIANT.

THEN, PARVATI AND SHIVA ENTERED THE CAVE.

BUT ANDHAKA HAD SLOWLY VENTURED FORWARD AGAIN.

I SEE NO ONE. WHERE COULD THEY HAVE GONE?

THEY MUST HAVE GONE INTO THE CAVE.

YOU ARE RIGHT, VIDHASA. GO BACK THERE AND TELL THE HERMIT THAT I WANT TO BATTLE WITH HIM AGAIN.

WHEN VIDHASA DELIVERED THE CHALLENGE—

ALL RIGHT— LET THE EVIL ASURA FIGHT ON IF HE HAS THE MIGHT TO DO SO.

THE MORNING OF THE BATTLE DAWNED. SHIVA SENT OFF AN ARMY OF DEVAS UNDER VIRAKA.

KEEP YOUR EYES STEADY UPON VICTORY, O DEVAS!

ON ANDHAKA'S SIDE—

TO VICTORY, MY ASURAS.

THE TWO FORCES HAD BARELY ADVANCED UPON ONE ANOTHER WHEN...

...LO! THE ASURA VIDHASA BEGAN TO GROW.

HE OPENED HIS CAVERNOUS MOUTH AND BEGAN TO SWALLOW THE DEVAS.

DOWN THE ASURA'S THROAT THEY WENT, HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF THEM.

VIRAKA ALONE ESCAPED.

HE FLED TO THE CAVE AND TOLD SHIVA WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

SHIVA BEGAN TO LAUGH. LIGHT RADIATED FROM HIM...

...AND SPREAD OVER THE WHOLE MANDARA REGION.

SHIVA'S RESPLENDENT FORM CHARGED VIRAKA WITH FRESH VIGOUR. HE WENT BACK TO FACE VIDHASA.

BUT THE ASURA SWALLOWED HIM AS WELL.

OH, NO! HOW WILL MY MASTER TACKLE THESE EVIL CREATURES ALL ALONE?

BUT VIRAKA NEED NOT HAVE WORRIED, FOR SHIVA WAS OMNIPOTENT. HE RODE UP TO THE ASURA HORDES...

...REPEATING THE CHANT THAT BRINGS ON THE THROWING UP OF WHAT IS SWALLOWED.

AND SURE ENOUGH, VIDHASA'S MOUTH WAS FORCED OPEN AGAINST HIS WILL...

...AND OUT CAME VIRAKA, FOLLOWED BY THE DEVAS.

THEY RESUMED THE BATTLE, WREAKING HAVOC UPON THE STUNNED ASURAS.

FINALLY, ANDHAKA ALONE REMAINED. HIS BODY WAS BATTERED AND BLEEDING, BUT HIS HOPES STILL RAN HIGH.

SHIVA! YOU ARE NOT FINISHED WITH ME AS YET. BEWARE, O WRETCH, OF ANDHAKA'S MIGHT!

AND SUDDENLY, MANY ANDHAKAS BEGAN TO RISE UP EVERYWHERE FROM THE ASURA'S DRIPPING BLOOD.

THEY ATTACKED SHIVA AND THE DEVAS.

BUT SHIVA'S TRIDENT KILLED EVERY ONE OF THEM...

...TILL AT LAST, WITH ALMOST ALL BLOOD SUCKED DRY FROM HIM, THE REAL ANDHAKA ALONE STOOD BEFORE SHIVA.

IN ONE MOVEMENT, SHIVA PIERCED HIS TRIDENT INTO THE ASURA AND HELD IT ALOFT.

HELD UP ON THAT PURIFYING TRIDENT, ANDHAKA'S BODY WITHERED TO SKIN AND BONE UNDER THE SCORCHING SUN.

THE TRIDENT HAD PIERCED HIS HEART, BUT ANDHAKA DID NOT DIE. INSTEAD A GREAT CHANGE CAME OVER HIM; A CHANGE FROM ARROGANCE TO HUMILITY, FROM HATRED TO DEVOTION.

O GREAT LORD OF THE UNIVERSE, DO NOT BE ANGRY WITH ME.

O MOON-CRESTED, ONE WITH THE BLUE THROAT, FORGIVE ME.

GENTLY, SHIVA LIFTED ANDHAKA OFF THE TRIDENT AND SET HIM DOWN.

YOU ARE FORGIVEN O COURAGEOUS ANDHAKA! CHOOSE A BOON.

ANDHAKA KNELT BEFORE SHIVA AND PARVATI.

O GREATEST OF THE GREAT, MY SIN OF FIGHTING YOU ON THE BATTLEFIELD WAS BORN OF PRIDE AND DELUSION.

I BESEECH THE MOTHER OF THE UNIVERSE NOT TO BE ANGRY WITH ME, BUT TO LOOK ON ME WITH COMPASSION. LET ME SEE HER ALWAYS AS MOTHER.

LET ME STAY WITH YOUR GANAS. I ASK TO BE YOUR DEVOTEE FOR ETERNITY.

I GRANT YOU ALL THIS, ANDHAKA.

THEN SHIVA MERELY TURNED HIS BENEVOLENT GLANCE UPON ANDHAKA AND ANDHAKA REMEMBERED THE FULL STORY OF HIS BIRTH.

I SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD BY NOW, ACCORDING TO THE DESTINY I HAD CHOSEN FOR MYSELF. IF I AM STILL ALIVE, IT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR GRACE.

AND ANDHAKA BOWED BEFORE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND KNEW HAPPINESS AT LAST.

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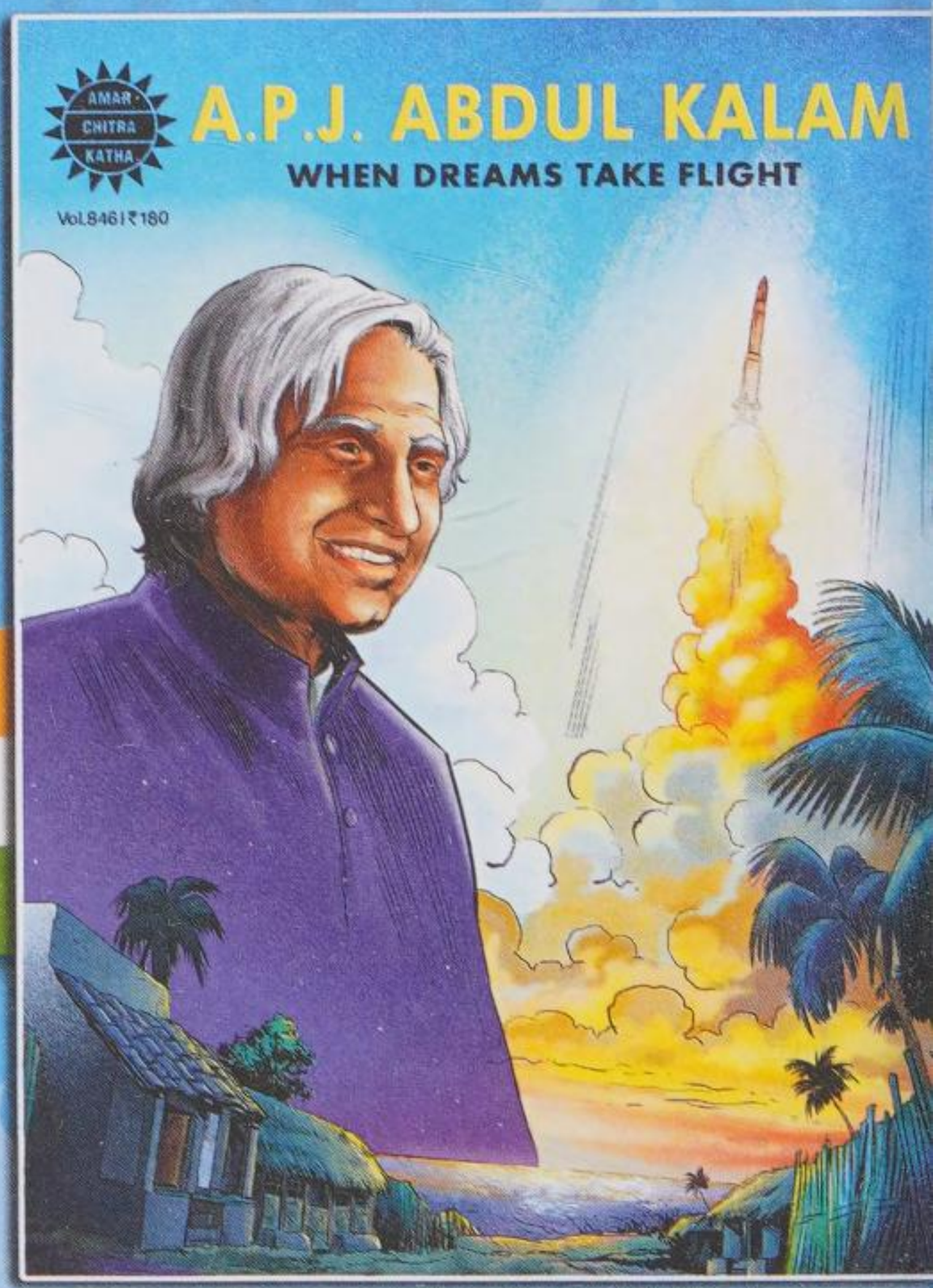


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